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Analysis of: War Diary No. 9

Ruestungskommando Metz of the Reich Minister for Armaments
and Munitions

Period covered: 1 June 42 - 30 Sep 42

Reorganization of War Economy Organization (Hitler decree of 7 May 42):

The former Defense-Economy and Armament Office is subdivided into:

- a. The Defense Economy Office (Wehrwirtschaftsamt) of the High Command of the Armed Forces
 - b. The Office for Armaments (Ruestungsamt) of the Reichsminister for Armament and Munitions,
- and the Armament Inspectorates are transformed into:

- a. Armament Inspectorates of the Reichsminister for Armament and Munitions and subordinate agencies
- b. Defense Economy Inspectorates (Wehrwirtschaftsinspektionen).

General report for the period

The Ruestungskommando Metz was successful in its endeavor to increase the production capacity of Lorraine.

Numerous new armament contracts have been given to the armament industry of Lorraine.

The completion of production processes is still hampered by difficulties in the procurement of raw materials, but the situation has improved.

Difficulties in the delivery of subcontractor materials and raw materials because transportation bottlenecks continued, but the situation has improved. The steel mills of Carlshuette, Rombach, and Hayingen received contracts for cartridge and shell blanks.

The power and electricity supply is generally satisfactory; the supply and production of coke and coal is good. The extraction and shipping of ore is on the increase. Further increases, as provided by the Roechling program (monthly increase of 1,150,000 tons) depend on the allocation of Russian POW's (of the 10,000 requested, only 600 arrived).

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There were individual bottlenecks in the metal industry of Niederjeutz (pipe diameter too small) and the screw factory Ars (pipe procurement).

The tight transportation situation has improved considerably, but the increase in railroad transportation capacity not utilized because of insufficient production. Water transport continues to increase. Poor construction of waterways and lack of traction power hold back development. Insufficient labor available for constantly needed repairs. Road transport kept up with demands: the lack of gasoline was less harmful because of early conversion to solid fuels. Mainly French vehicles were involved, for which reason refitting with French parts was facilitated. Tires were available because of stockpiling, but the replacement of French spare parts becomes more and more difficult, and with enormous wear and tear on vehicles, the time draws near when the favorable situation of Lorraine will become unfavorable. A steady and independent source of wood for generator gas was provided by a processing plant in Forbach which started operations in September 1942.

The labor situation took a turn for the worse. The report makes it quite clear that the long-range political program of Germanization of the area by the resettlement of Frenchmen in France, the security deportations by the Gestapo and the SD (Security Service), and the extension of Reich citizenship and the military draft to Lorraine during September played havoc with the economic program and the responsibility of running an armaments industry. The report points out that the labor situation would become "catastrophic" if the political authorities insisted on resettlement. The announcement of the extension of German citizenship and the military draft caused considerable unrest among the population, and led to wide-scale application for resettlement to France and refusal to work in all sections of the region. Many workers stayed away from work for 2 days, and during September alone, 500 persons applied for resettlement (almost all the leading employees of the Fentsch-Orne group applied). The report intimates that the long-range peace program

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which motivates the resettlement policy only endangers the German war economy.

Armament construction projects for the period

Construction projects generally were retarded by difficulties in the procurement of machines, fuel, raw materials, by a lack of coordination between agencies and by general transportation bottlenecks. New construction or expansion of existing manufacturing facilities took place at Siemens, Noeckel and Hobus in Metz, and Schuette in Forbach. A major construction project was the Ebingen plant of the Hermann Goering Werke in Hayingen for the manufacture of an initial quantity of 150,000 8.8 cm antiaircraft shells, with 150,000 to follow later. The total building volume amounted to RM 1,569,410. Workers needed from October 1942 to April 1943 -- 1,200. Additional expansion of the Hayingen rolling mill by RM 200,000. The project was progressing, but ran into difficulties because Armament Expansion Frankfurt (Ruestungsausbau Frankfurt), as caretaker of the project, did not cooperate especially in the procurement of fuel. The labor office was unable to assign sufficient construction labor. The project depended for machines, machine tools, transportation installations, fuel, and structural iron (269 tons) on allocations from the German economy.

Considerable air-raid protection measures were taken.

The Siemens Halske (Metz) project consisted in the conversion of a former school building into a finishing plant. The Roechling Iron and Steel Works "Karlshuette" received a permit to install a 6-ton electric arc furnace.

Existing plants receiving armament orders

The armament factory receiving considerable attention in the report is the Meissner explosives at Gelingenhof, near Busendorf. Trouble developed because of insufficient railroad siding and unloading facilities. The Reich railroad administration tried in vain to enforce higher orders (Goering) for speedier freight handling and the return of empty freight cars. The plant kept freight cars tied up for 4 times the allowed time.

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Structural deficiencies of the roadbed, the rails, the loading ramp, etc., were found to be the reasons for the delays, but no real remedy was possible because of incurable lack of railroad materials, rails, etc. Lack of qualified workers and the poor conditions for the available workers (workers without shoes) hampered utilization of existing plant facilities. The utilization of the existing plant further depended on the quick expansion of installations and the completion of started projects. Partially connected roads, drainage ditches between bomb craters, lack of derricks, etc. hampered this expansion tremendously. Transportation of workers to the plant was to be discontinued because of lack of fuel. Instead, barracks/^{were}to be erected on the site as dormitories. The need for cooperation between all interested agencies was stressed in order to solve problems. In a later conference, a solution to the problems was attempted. The labor problem was to be solved by an increased assignment of forced labor (eastern workers). But according to the report, this kind of labor supply does not seem to be very reliable: poor work performance, 30 out of 100 assigned eastern workers escaped because of bad food supplied by German Labor Front. No improvement in the unloading facilities seemed to be possible, for which reason a limitation of incoming freight cars to 12 per day is suggested. The Meissner munitions plant is further mentioned in the report with respect to a plant expansion request: the plant asks for a permit to erect facilities for the unloading of artillery projectile charges in order to recover from them PNT and ammonium nitrate.

The following armament orders are mentioned in the report:

1. Haffner, Saargemuend, 20,000 airtight cartridge cases anti-tank 38 (Army)
 - 800 protective shields for 2 cm antiaircraft 38 (Navy)
 - 1,596 protective shields for 2 cm antiaircraft 38 (Army)

The orders could be filled without additional labor and machine installations.

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2. "Forbacher Eisenindustrie" in Forbach started production of 8.8 cm HE-shells. The planned output for July was 1,000 rounds. The same firm delivered 270 sets of fittings for armored vehicles.
3. "Neue Lothringer Blechwarenfabrik", Metz, received an order for 3,000 shells for light howitzers.
4. "Herdfabrik Scholtes" Diedenhofen, received an order for 12,000 airtight shell cases 18
5. "Renger & Co.", Metz, received an order for 3,000 packing cases of type 32 steel, 300 sleighs HS 3
6. "Metallindustrie Neunkirchen", branch Niederjeutz, received an order for 600,000 standard containers for fuel, 20 liter capacity
7. J. M. Hubert Soehne, Metz, received an order for 300 "Waffenakja" (Transport sleighs)
8. "Carlschuetze" Diedenhofen, received an SS-type order for 300 tons of cases for shells, 3.7 cm and up
9. "Rombacher Huette" in Rombach received an order for 700 tons of cases for shells.
10. "Reichswerke Hermann Goering Hayingen" received an order for 2,500 tons of cases for artillery shells.
11. "Schraubenfabrik Ars on the Moselle", 300,000 square-head screws Din 556
12. Teophil Rollin, Metz, 360 HS-sleighs.

Special Plants (Spezialbetriebe)

The following plants were appointed "special plants" (Spezialbetriebe) by the Ruestungskommando Metz as recipients of war orders of the S and SS priority type.

1. Kowalor, A.G., Iron and sheet metal constructions, Machern near Metz.
2. Lothringnische Zuendschnuerwerke (wicks & fuses), Ars on the Moselle.
3. "Eisen-und Blechkonstruktionswerk (iron and sheet metal) Niederjeutz.
4. "Deutsche Bergwerks- und Huettenbau Gesellschaft m.b.H., branch Westmark, in Hayingen.

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5. Kristallfabrik St. Louis A.G. in Muenstal
6. P. A. von der Crone, Plant II - compound machinery
7. Maschinenfabrik in Wiblingen
8. Aluminium Schmelzwerk Heinrich Mueller K.G. in Saargemuend
9. Ing. Franckhauser in Meisenthal
10. Eduard Pister Eisenkonstruktionswerk in St. Avold

Armed Forces Plants (W-Betriebe)

The following plants were made Armed Forces (W) plants:

1. Herbert Schuette in Forbach
2. Metallindustrie Neunkirchen, branch Niederjeutz
3. Sesa Schlossfabrik
4. Spritzgusswerk, Saargemuend

Plant inspections for capacity determination

Officers of the Ruestungskommando Metz undertook the following inspections to determine war potential of individual plants:

1. An urgent inspection was undertaken at "Neue Lothringer Blechwarenfabrik" regarding assembled shells for light howitzers (designation by firm S K 7613). The inspection ascertained that capacity existed to produce 20,000 pieces in 500 hours without additional manpower and machinery.
2. Stahlrohrwerke Diedenhofen (formerly Tubeal) were found to be able to produce only soldered pipes up to an inner diameter of 25 cm.

Need for new German machinery

Applications for new German machinery were supported by "Group III" of the Inspectorate for:

1. Herbert Schuette, Forbach, 34 machines.
2. Sprengstoffwerke Meissner, Gelingenhof near Busendorf, 3 machines.
3. Huettenverwaltung Westmark of the Reichswerke Hermann Goering, Hayingen, 3 machines.
4. Haffner, Saargemuend, 4 machines.

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Bottlenecks

1. Materials. Difficulties in the procurement of materials hampered the production of several existing firms and made it impossible for new plants to start production.
2. Labor. The labor offices were unable to make needed number of workers available. Many workers were drawn into agriculture for the harvest season. Work efficiency of foreign workers low. Especially the Italians gave trouble. In one mine the Italians refused to work because of bad food. Numerous foreign workers escaped from plants. Maintenance work on waterways impeded by lack of labor. Allocation of more foreign labor slowed by transportation difficulties.
3. Fuel. One of principal shortages existed in fuel supply, especially Diesel oil and gasoline.
4. Transportation. Bottleneck somewhat relieved by canal transportation, especially increase on Moselle canal: 50,000 tons against former monthly average of 20,000. But canal transport limited by "catastrophic shortage of barge space." On an inspection trip along the Moselle, canal one idle barge was detected, and the fact that its presence had not been reported before was made subject matter of a report to Armament Inspection XII, etc.
5. Hydroelectric power plant Metz. Low water level resulted in reduction of power production in August from 1 to 1.2 million kilowatt monthly to 250,000. Deficiency had to be made up by import of current from Germany, whereby the long distance supply was subject to many interruptions.

Substitutes and make-shift procurement

1. Gas for oil. Policy to convert plants from Diesel and fuel oil is carried out. The Knuettingen steel mill and Ars screw factory were ordered to convert furnaces to gas by the end of 1942. Gas production from coal was facilitated by increased production of coke and coal, except for the city of Metz, where a lack of coal brought difficulties in the gas supply. But in general, the supply of Lorraine with coal for gas production seemed sufficient.
2. Smudge coal for electricity production. Smudge coal, in ample supply in the Saar area, was used to increase electricity supply.

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Captured materials

1. The "Westmark Einfuhr Gesellschaft m.b.H" gives final accounting on value of captured French materials sent to Germany listing value for taxation purposes as 1,162,154 RM, an amount which is considered by the German High Command to be too low.

2. Order by Army High Command 1 of Sept 42 made captured French implements available for the reconstruction of Lorraine, the needs of the Armed Forces, and for air raid protection measures. After German industry had "combed out" captured machinery for own needs, the remaining machinery remained in unprotected storage and was, therefore, subject to pilferage and ruin by the weather. Therefore, the Ruestingskommando Metz decided to make the machinery available without further investigation into the former ownership (French state or private citizen).

Plant protection

By order of the Armament Inspectorate XII, the counter-espionage activities and plant protection of public utilities, mines, and chemical plants will in the future be in the hands of the SD (Security Service) or the Gestapo.

Air raid damage

1. Attack on Saarbruecken during the night of 29-30 July: "Forbacher Eisenindustrie" in Forbach damaged by an HE bomb falling on railroad track at 100 meter distance from plant. Damage to roofs, windows; the supply of current was interrupted and the plant was out of operation until 3 August, when partial operations resumed. Total manpower loss for Armed Forces production was 841½ hours.

2. Production loss because of air raids increased considerably. W (Armed Forces) plants under the supervision of the Army reported a loss of 1,054 3/4 manpower hours for the period 16 July - 15 August.

3. Coal mines were seriously damaged by air attacks, which resulted in a loss of production of 4,700 tons for August.

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